

## News Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Business Training Alliance Merges With Regional Business Network; More Services Available for Local Businesses

CADILLAC, MI— The Business Training Alliance (BTA) launched in April of 2011 as an entrepreneurial development program for Wexford and Missaukee counties. After a successful first year of the program, the BTA has merged with the northwest regional office of the Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center (MI-SBTDC), bringing even more resources to support small businesses in the region.

Since its launch, BTA has counseled more than 40 small businesses in the Cadillac area, including 14 start-up businesses. These counseling efforts resulted in more than \$1 million in capital formation and approximately 20 new jobs. In addition, 219 people received training in starting and managing a small business.

“I have referred several clients to the BTA,” said Jon Catlin, Community President of Chemical Bank. “When a business is unprepared to obtain financing, they need the expert help of this program.”

The BTA began in partnership with many local organizations, including the Cadillac Area Chamber of Commerce, Baker College of Cadillac, Northwest Michigan Works!, and numerous local businesses. A primary partner was the Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center.

The MI-SBTDC is a network of business consultants and resources providing business counseling, training, and market research to small businesses. Programs are available in every state; in Michigan, there are 12 regional offices. The program is funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and is hosted in Northwest Michigan by Northwest Michigan Council of Governments.

(MORE)

“By merging with MI-SBTDC, we can access a larger system of resources,” said Annie Shetler, BTA Coordinator and MI-SBTDC Certified Small Business Consultant. “We can conduct market research using the systems and data of the MI-SBTDC and we can bring business counseling specialists to the region. These specialists include teams of consultants that emphasize growth, technology, and manufacturing.”

Ms. Shetler will continue to serve as the primary business consultant for Wexford and Missaukee counties, and will also provide specialized counseling to agriculture businesses throughout northwest Michigan. To access these services, any business or aspiring entrepreneur in Wexford and Missaukee counties can call 1-888-774-7988 or visit [www.nwm.org/sbtcdc](http://www.nwm.org/sbtcdc).

“This is an exciting step forward for our community,” said Bruce Schafer, Vice President of Rexair. “The more help and resources we can give to local businesses, the more successful our entire region will be.”

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NOTE to Media: Images are oftentimes available upon request by e-mailing Tom White at [tomwhite@nwm.com.mi.us](mailto:tomwhite@nwm.com.mi.us) and stating preferences for resolution (300 dpi?), file format (.tif? .jpg?) and file size (1MB or less?). Or, phone (231) 929-5044. Check our online Media Room at: <http://nwm.org/media>

The Northwest Michigan Council of Governments, founded in 1973, facilitates and manages services and programs for 10 counties in the region. These programs include Regional Planning and Community Development, Northwest Michigan Sustainable Business Forum, Northwest Michigan Works, Workforce Development Board, Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center Region 2, Hospitality Skills Alliance, the Procurement Technical Assistance Center program, KAL-TEC, Healthcare Skills Alliance of Northwest Michigan, and the Regional Repository for US Census data.

Some services of NWMCOG are in direct support of the counties, some are independent services provided to the public and businesses at large. NWMCOG is able to leverage several collaborative partnerships to extend limited resources and provide economies of scale for projects that operate on a regional basis. NWMCOG's member counties are: Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford.